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AUTHOR Borgers, Sherry B., Comp.; Ward, G. Robert, Comp.
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ABSTRACT

This exploratory module is designed to familiarize the learner with the NEA (National Education Association) Code of Ethics. Teaching situations are presented enabling the learner to decide upon an action if he/she were the teacher in the situation. The learner's decision is then discussed in relation to the NEA Code. (MJM)

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12.0

Professional Ethics for the Educator

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SP018 874

Compiled by:

Sherry B. Borgers
G. Robert Ward
University of Houston

AFFECTIVE 12

I. IDENTIFIERS:

A. Module Name:

Professional Ethics for the Educator

B. Compiled by:

Sherry B. Borgers

G. Robert Ward

C. Area:

Affective

D. Number:

12

II. PROSPECTUS:

A. Rationale:

Every profession has a code of ethics which serves as a guideline for the professionals in that field. The code of ethics for the education profession is the National Education Association (NEA) Code of Ethics.

B. Purpose:

As a teacher you will be a part of the education profession; therefore, there is a need for you to be familiar with the NEA Code of Ethics. This module will introduce you to the NEA Code of Ethics.

C. Overview of Module:

1. Form a group of 20-24 people; contact instructor and set a time for a 90 minute seminar.

2. Attend the seminar and participate in the activities:

a. Individually:

1) Read NEA Code of Ethics.

2) Read the Teaching Situations and decide what you would do if you were the teacher.

b. Form a subgroup of 4-6 people and compare proposed actions.

c. Participate in the total group discussions.

D. Terminal Objective:

This objective is exploratory in nature. Upon completion of the module you will have decided what action you would take if you were the teacher in the situations, and you will have also determined whether or not your actions are consistent with the NEA Code of Ethics.

E. How to Complete Module:

Form a group, attend the seminar, and follow the directions given by the instructor.

III. PREREQUISITES:

None

IV. ENABLING OBJECTIVES:

None

V. PRE-ASSESSMENT:

None

VI. ACTIVITIES:

A. General Instructions:

This module provides an opportunity for you to become familiar with the NEA Code of Ethics. If you do not invest yourself, you will get little from the module.

> If you have questions, if you have concerns, or if a particular task seems to be difficult for you, please contact the instructor. Remember to complete the module as honestly as possible so that you can gain the maximum benefit from the suggested activities.

B. Specific Activities:

12.1 Form a group of 20-24 people, contact the instructor and set a time for a 90 minute seminar.

12.2 Attend the seminar and participate in the activities.

a. Read the NEA Code of Ethics (See Appendix A).

b. Read the Teaching Situation (See Appendix B). Decide what action you would take if you were the teacher. Check to see if your actions are consistent with the Code of Ethics. Be able to give a rationale for your actions. Do this activity individually.

c. Form subgroups of 4-6 people and compare your proposed actions with the actions suggested by other members of your subgroup. If there are different proposed actions, refer to the NEA Code of Ethics to see if all of the actions are ethical. It is not necessary that the members of subgroups agree; however, each of you should be able to give a rationale for your choice.

d. After the subgroups have compared answers, the instructor will lead a discussion about the NEA Code of Ethics. You may wish to consider the rationale for the Code, the value of the Code, the relation of the Code to the teaching profession, the relation of the Code to human relations skills, and how you as a teacher might change the Code of Ethics. You may also wish to discuss what to do when there is no one correct action. As a teacher there are many times when you will have to do what you believe to be best without knowing if it is really the correct action. Questions or concerns that you may have about these or similar situations and professional ethics will also be discussed.

VII. POST-ASSESSMENT:

None

APPENDIX A

CODE OF ETHICS OF THE EDUCATION PROFESSION*

Approved by the Representative Assembly of the National Education Association July 5, 1968, and amended July 3, 1970.

PREAMBLE

The educator believes in the worth and dignity of man. He recognizes the supreme importance of the pursuit of truth, devotion to excellence, and the nurture of democratic citizenship. He regards as essential to these goals the protection of freedom to learn and to teach and the guarantee of equal educational opportunity for all. The educator accepts his responsibility to practice his profession according to the highest ethical standards.

The educator recognizes the magnitude of the responsibility he has accepted in choosing a career in education, and engages himself, individually and collectively with other educators, to judge his colleagues, and to be judged by them, in accordance with the provisions of this code.

PRINCIPLE I;

Committment to the Student

The educator measures his success by the progress of each student toward realization of his potential as a worthy and effective citizen. The educator therefore works to stimulate the spirit of inquiry, the acquisition of knowledge and

*From NEA Handbook, 1971-72, pp. 105-107.

understanding, and the thoughtful formulation of worthy goals.

In fulfilling his obligation to the student, the educator:

1. Shall not without just cause restrain the student from independent action in his pursuit of learning, and shall not without just cause deny the student access to varying points of view.
2. Shall not deliberately suppress or distort subject matter for which he bears responsibility.
3. Shall make reasonable effort to protect the student from conditions harmful to learning or to health and safety.
4. Shall conduct professional business in such a way that he does not expose the student to unnecessary embarrassment or disparagement.
5. Shall not on the ground of race, color, creed, or national origin exclude any student from participation in or deny him benefits under any program, nor grant any discriminatory consideration or advantage.
6. Shall not use professional relationships with students for private advantage.
7. Shall keep in confidence information that has been obtained in the course of professional service, unless disclosure serves professional purpose or is required by law.

8. Shall not tutor for remuneration students assigned to his class, unless no other qualified teacher is reasonably available.

PRINCIPLE II:

Committment to the Public

The educator believes that patriotism in its highest form requires dedication to the principles of our democratic heritage. He shares with all other citizens the responsibility for the development of sound public policy and assumes full political and citizenship responsibilities. The educator bears particular responsibility for the development of sound public policy relating to the extension of educational opportunities for all and for interpreting educational programs and policies to the public.

In fulfilling his obligation to the public, the educator:

1. Shall not misrepresent an institution or organization with which he is affiliated, and shall take adequate precautions to distinguish between his personal and institutional or organizational views.
2. Shall not knowingly distort or misrepresent the facts concerning educational matters in direct and indirect public expressions.
3. Shall not interfere with a colleague's exercise of political and citizenship rights and responsibilities.
4. Shall not use institutional privileges for private gain or to promote political candidates or partisan political activities.

5. Shall accept no gratuities, gifts, or favors that might impair or appear to impair professional judgment, nor offer any favor, service, or thing of value to obtain special advantage.

PRINCIPLE III:

Commitment to the Profession

The educator believes that the quality of the services of the education profession directly influences the nation and its citizens. He therefore exerts every effort to raise professional standards, to improve his service, to promote a climate in which the exercise of professional judgment is encouraged, and to achieve conditions which attract persons worthy of the trust to careers in education. Aware of the value of united effort, he contributes actively to the support, planning, and programs of professional organizations.

In fulfilling his obligation to the profession, the educator:

1. Shall not discriminate on the grounds of race, color, creed, or national origin for membership in professional organizations, nor interfere with the free participation of colleagues in the affairs of their association.
2. Shall accord just and equitable treatment to all members of the profession in the exercise of their professional rights and responsibilities.
3. Shall not use coercive means or promise special treatment in order to influence professional decisions of colleagues.

4. Shall withhold and safeguard information acquired about colleagues in the course of employment, unless disclosure serves professional purposes.
5. Shall not refuse to participate in a professional inquiry when requested by an appropriate professional association.
6. Shall provide upon the request of the aggrieved party a written statement of specific reason for recommendations that lead to denial of increments, significant changes in employment, or termination of employment.
7. Shall not misrepresent his professional qualifications.
8. Shall not knowingly distort evaluations of colleagues.

PRINCIPLE IV:

Commitment to Professional Employment Practices

The educator regards the employment agreement as a pledge to be executed both in spirit and in fact in a manner consistent with the highest ideals of professional service. He believes that sound professional personnel relationships with governing boards are built upon personal integrity, dignity, and mutual respect. The educator discourages the practice of his profession by unqualified persons.

In fulfilling his obligation to professional employment practices, the educator:

1. Shall apply for, accept, offer, or assign a position of responsibility on the basis of professional preparation and legal qualifications.

2. Shall apply for a specific position only when it is known to be vacant, and shall refrain from underbidding or commenting adversely about other candidates.
3. Shall not knowingly withhold information regarding a position from a applicant, or misrepresent an assignment or conditions of employment.
4. Shall give prompt notice to the employing agency of any change in availability or service, and the employing agent shall give prompt notice of change in availability or nature of a position.
5. Shall adhere to the terms of a contract or appointment, unless these terms have been legally terminated, falsely represented, or substantially altered by unilateral action of the employing agency.
6. Shall conduct professional business through channels, when available, that have been jointly approved by the professional organization and the employing agency.
7. Shall not delegate assigned tasks to unqualified personnel.
8. Shall permit no commercial exploitation of his professional position.
9. Shall use time granted for the purpose for which it is intended.

APPENDIX B

TEACHING SITUATIONS

I. Situation 1

You have been teaching in the same school for seven years. Your department has a supervisor whom you neither like nor respect. You said nothing earlier this year when you believed she overlooked your good qualities; now you see that she is doing the same thing to a new teacher whom she does not like.

II. Situation 2

You know that the teacher next door is a poor teacher. A boy whom you know to be a good student comes to you and tells you he is in her class. He says that she is incompetent and that he is learning nothing. He pleads with you to write a note to the counselor saying that he has your permission to transfer to your class.

III. Situation 3

You find a note in your box from the principal. He asks you to come to his office. When you get to his office, he is angry because he believes you have not been doing your cafeteria duty. You have been doing your duty; however, you know that the teacher who is supposed to relieve you never comes on time.

IV. Situation 4

You have taken your students on a field trip. You see one of them steal an object from the museum. Her mother

is a chaperone; you believe that she also saw her daughter take the object, but she says nothing.

V. Situation 5

One of your students who is a senior tells you his girlfriend is pregnant. The school year ends in another month, and they plan to be married then. He tells you this in confidence. His girlfriend is also in one of your classes, and her pregnancy is beginning to be obvious. The school rules state that neither married nor pregnant students can attend classes.

VI. Situation 6

One of your first grade students often comes to school with bruises and black marks on her arms and legs. She seems afraid of all adults. You believe her father abuses her, but you have no real proof.

VII. Situation 7

You and three other teachers have taken a group of students to see a play. One of the teachers is gone for several minutes; when he returns it is obvious that he has been drinking. You and he came on the same bus with sixty junior high school students.

VIII. Situation 8

You believe in encouraging your students to express their opinions, and at times you state your opinion about a controversial issue. During Public School Week a parent comes to visit your class. At the end of the class he

tells you that he is going to complain to the principal; he calls you a liberal and says that you are forcing your ideas on the students. He says that it is a teacher's job to be objective. Your students are still in the room, and they are looking at you, waiting for you to reply.

IX. Situation 9

You have a boy in one of your accelerated classes. He is incapable of doing the work. You talk to him about transferring to another class where the work is less demanding. He tells you that his parents force him to take accelerated classes, and he knows he is not really smart enough. You feel sorry for him so you agree to let him stay in your class. However, he cannot compete with the other students, and the first semester he receives a "C". He then becomes upset because his parents are not happy with his grades. During the second semester he develops an ulcer. His mother calls you at home and tells you that her son has an ulcer; she also points out that you demanded too much of her son in your accelerated class.

X. Situation 10

You are at a party. A lady whom you do not know tells a story about a teacher at the school where you teach. She does not have all the facts, and you believe she is being unfair to both the teacher and the school.